



Nursery & Garden Industry  
Australia

## FEATURE

---

Thursday, 20 December 2018

### **Green infrastructure sprouts solutions for developers and community**

*The benefits of green infrastructure are well known, but how can we encourage broad scale adoption in Australia's residential and commercial property development sectors? A message from Peter Vaughan, the CEO of the organisation representing Australia's \$2.29 billion nursery and garden industry.*

There is a compelling case for more green infrastructure across the country. The increasing urbanisation of our cities is closely correlated to the reduced connection many feel is occurring regarding our ability to enjoy the great outdoors.

Further supporting that view was a survey conducted recently that found Australians would give up 5 per cent of their salary to have regular interaction with nature during their workday.

As CEO of Nursery and Garden Industry Australia (NGIA), I see an unprecedented opportunity for developers to take a fresh look at green infrastructure and the benefits it can have on business, customer satisfaction and overall community good.

In fact, there is a real impetus for developers, landscape architects and consultant teams, to collaborate often and early with our industry, to ensure green design is strategic and cost-effective.

Incorporating green design earlier in the building timeline is a must for developers, to ensure selected plant species thrive, and costs and maintenance are kept to a minimum.

A new prediction from the International Labor Organisation highlighted that construction of new environmentally-friendly buildings is expected to generate more than 6.5 million jobs worldwide by 2030.

So why then, in many cases is green infrastructure still seen as a 'box to tick', rather than a point from which to excel and capitalise on for the benefit of developer and community?

In a competitive urban development environment, there's many reasons, from economic to ecological, to make the shift to strategic green design.

Just recently, a report released by Sydney-based consultancy Edge Environment, sought to strengthen the formal recognition of green infrastructure through well-known environmental rating schemes such as Green Star.

The report looked at the significant financial, environmental and social benefits of green infrastructure, and collated a suite of evidence to bolster the business case for more green space at the hands of developers, architects and urban planners.



Nursery & Garden Industry  
Australia

## FEATURE

---

It highlighted changing community attitudes towards green life, citing a 2017 AECOM survey that found Australians were willing to pay 7 per cent more for a home if green space was nearby, and sacrifice 5 per cent of their salary to be closer to nature.

More broadly, the report pointed out the power of plants to curb greenhouse gas emissions, replenish biodiversity, improve stormwater management and relieve issues such as poor air quality and the 'urban heat island' effect.

There is no doubt the report findings build a strong case for more green infrastructure in the community. Even locally, it states that property values in Sydney were set to increase on average to \$164/m<sup>2</sup> for every 10 per cent of canopy cover increase in street trees.

Currently, environmental schemes such as the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star and the Infrastructure Sustainability Rating Tool, provide a way to reward developers for their commitment to green infrastructure and to acknowledge forward-thinking designs as best in class.

The research by Edge Environment has been provided to the Green Building Council of Australia and Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia, to help underpin the development of 'credits' in their respective rating tools.

These tools must carry weight in the community to encourage greater uptake of green space amongst developers. They must reward and recognise the good in green, including its ability to boost social cohesion and physical activity, and even create jobs for the future.

Whether its tree shading to mitigate heat or green walls to lower energy bills, there are plenty of green infrastructure types to boost the aesthetics of our built environment, as well as increase the wellbeing and health of our communities.

If we can achieve that, then we're certainly on track for a stronger, more sustainable future.

### Fast facts:

- Plants are considered in 11 different credits of the Green Star Rating Tools including Ecological Value, Heat Island Effect, Stormwater, Healthy & Active Living & Indoor Pollutants.
- 5% of Australia's workforce and 30% of its office space is currently rated under GreenStar by the Green Building Council of Australia.
- The capital value of infrastructure projects registered with the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia is worth \$80.2 billion.
- Property values in Sydney are expected to increase on average \$164/m<sup>2</sup> in result of a 10% canopy increase in street trees.
- A green roof can reduce the cooling load of the building by up to 60%
- People in contact with vegetation are healthier, happier and more productive.
- A survey among Australian's concluded they would give up 5% of their salary to have regular interaction with nature during their workday and pay 7% more for a home if a green space is nearby.

\*\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*\*



Nursery & Garden Industry  
Australia

## FEATURE

---

For further information, please contact Sophie Keatinge, Cox Inall Communications, on 0430 938 515 or [sophie.keatinge@coxinall.com.au](mailto:sophie.keatinge@coxinall.com.au)

**Hort  
Innovation**  
Strategic levy investment

**NURSERY  
FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit [horticulture.com.au](http://horticulture.com.au)